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SENATE BILL 5317

State of Washington 52nd Legislature 1991 Regular Session

By Senators Saling, Gaspard, Patterson, Bauer, Barr, Hansen, Jesernig, Newhouse, Hayner, Bailey, Nelson, Madsen, Matson, Owen and Stratton.

Read first time January 28, 1991. Referred to Committee on Agriculture & Water Resources.

AN ACT Relating to research and extension programs of Washington State University; adding a new chapter to Title 15 RCW; and making an appropriation.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that public concerns are increasing over the loss of agricultural lands, degradation of natural resources, potential pollution of air and water by pesticide residues, and safety of the food production chain. The legislature finds that the pesticide reregistration process and approval requirements will lead to the removal of many chemicals traditionally thought to be essential to Washington agriculture. Likewise, the loss of incentives to manufacturers for maintaining registration of pesticides that protect minor crops requires participation by public service agencies. Farmers are risking crop

loss from a lack of registered pesticides that will remain on the market.

The legislature recognizes that Washington State University supports research and extension programs that will lead to reductions in pesticide use where viable alternatives are both environmentally and economically sound. Yet, the legislature finds that a focused and coordinated program is needed to develop possible alternatives, increase public confidence in the safety of the food system, and educate farmers and natural resource managers on land stewardship.

The legislature further finds that growers, processors, and agribusiness depend upon pesticide laboratories associated with manufacturers, regional universities, state departments of agriculture, and the United States department of agriculture to provide residue data for registering essential pesticides. The registration of uses for minor crops, which include vegetables, fruits, nuts, berries, nursery and greenhouse crops, and reregistration of needed chemicals, are activities of particular concern to ensure crop production. Furthermore, public demands for improved information and education on pesticides and risk assessment efforts justify these efforts.

The legislature further finds that multiple alternatives are needed for pest control, including programs for integrated pest management, genetic resistance to pests, biological control, cultural practices, and the use of appropriate approved chemicals.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Center" means the center for sustaining agriculture and natural resources established at Washington State University.

(2) "Laboratory" means the food and environmental quality laboratory established at Washington State University at Tri-Cities.

(3) "Integrated pest management" is a strategy that uses various combinations of pest control methods, biological, cultural, and chemical, in a compatible manner to achieve satisfactory control and ensure favorable economic and environmental consequences.

(4) "IR-4 program" means interregional research project number four, clearances of chemicals and biologics for minor or special uses, established in 1963 by the cooperative state research service of the United States department of agriculture, the coordinated national program involving land-grant universities and the United States department of agriculture to provide data required for the registration of pesticides needed for the production of minor crops.

(5) "Natural resources" means soil, water, air, forests, wetlands, wildlands, and wildlife.

(6) "Pesticide" means chemical or biologic used to control pests such as insect, rodent, nematode, snail, slug, weed, virus, or any organism the director of agriculture may declare to be a pest.

(7) "Registration" means use of a pesticide approved by the state department of agriculture.

(8) "Sustainable agriculture" means a systems approach to farming, ranching, and natural resource production that builds on and supports the physical, biological, and ecological resource base upon which agriculture depends. The goals of sustainable agriculture are to provide human food and fiber needs in an economically viable manner for the agriculture industry and in a manner which protects the environment and contributes to the overall safety and quality of life.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A center for sustaining agriculture and natural resources is established at Washington State University. The

center shall provide state-wide leadership in research, extension, and resident instruction programs to sustain agriculture and natural resources. Research programs shall focus on developing possible alternative production and marketing systems through integrated pest management, plant and animal breeding, and conservation strategies, thus formulating a better understanding of the ecological basis of nutrient management and biological pest control. Extension education programs shall incorporate on-farm demonstrations and evaluation of production practices, information dissemination, education concerning sustainable agriculture and natural resource systems, and communication and training on sustainable agriculture strategies for consumers, producers, and farm and conservation-related organizations.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The center's primary activities include but are not limited to:

(1) On-farm testing and research to calculate and demonstrate costs and benefits, including economic and environmental benefits and trade-offs, inherent in farming systems and technologies;

(2) Crop rotation and other natural resource processes such as pest-predator interaction to mitigate weed, disease, and insect problems, thereby reducing soil erosion and environmental impacts;

(3) Management systems to improve nutrient uptake, health, and resistance to diseases and pests by incorporating the genetic and biological potential of plants and animals into production practices;

(4) Soil management, including conservation tillage and other practices to minimize soil loss and maintain soil productivity;

(5) Animal production systems emphasizing preventive disease practices and mitigation of environmental pollution; and

(6) Integrated pest management.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The center is managed by an administrator. The administrator shall hold a joint appointment as an assistant director in the Washington State University agricultural research center and cooperative extension.

(1) A committee shall advise the administrator. The advisory committee shall include representatives from the Washington department of social and health services, the Washington department of ecology, the Washington department of agriculture, the chemical and fertilizer industry, food processors, marketing groups, consumer groups, environmental groups, and natural resource and agricultural organizations.

(2) It is the responsibility of the administrator, in consultation with the advisory committee, to:

(a) Recommend research and extension priorities for the center;

(b) Conduct a competitive grants process to solicit, review, and prioritize research and extension proposals; and

(c) Advise Washington State University on the progress of the development and implementation of research, teaching, and extension programs that sustain agriculture and natural resources of Washington.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A food and environmental quality laboratory is established at Washington State University at Tri-Cities to conduct pesticide residue studies concerning fresh and processed foods, environmental components, and human and animal safety. The laboratory shall cooperate with public and private laboratories in Washington, Idaho, and Oregon.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** The responsibilities of the laboratory shall include:

(1) Evaluating regional requirements for minor crop registration through the federal IR-4 program;

(2) Conducting studies on the fate of pesticides on crops and in the environment;

(3) Improving pesticide information and education programs; and

(4) Assisting federal and state agencies with questions regarding registration of pesticides which are deemed critical to crop production, consistent with priorities established in section 8 of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** The laboratory is advised by a board appointed by the dean of the Washington State University college of agriculture and home economics. The dean shall cooperate with appropriate officials in Washington, Idaho, and Oregon in selecting board members.

(1) The board shall consist of one representative from each of the following groups: A human toxicologist from the University of Washington school of medicine, the Washington State University vice-provost for research or designee, the director of the department of agriculture or designee, the director of the department of ecology or designee, privately owned Washington pesticide analytical laboratories, federal regional pesticide laboratories, an Idaho and Oregon laboratory, whether state, university, or private, a chemical and fertilizer industry representative, farm organizations, food processors, marketers, farm labor, environmental organizations, and consumers. Each board member shall serve a three-year term.

(2) The board shall review the chemicals investigated by the laboratory according to the following criteria:

(a) Chemical uses for which a data base exists on environmental fate and acute toxicology, and that appear safer environmentally than pesticides available on the market;

(b) Chemical uses not currently under evaluation by public laboratories in Idaho or Oregon for use on Washington crops;

(c) Chemicals that have lost or may lose their registration and that no reasonably viable alternatives for Washington crops are known; and

(d) Other chemicals vital to Washington agriculture.

(3) The laboratory shall conduct research activities using approved good laboratory practices, namely procedures and recordkeeping required of the national IR-4 minor use pesticide registration program.

(4) The laboratory shall coordinate activities with the national IR-4 program.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** The sum of seven million eight hundred thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the biennium ending June 30, 1993, from the general fund to Washington State University for the purposes of carrying out this act. Of this appropriation, six million six hundred thousand dollars, shall be expended for the center for sustaining agriculture and natural resources and one million two hundred thousand dollars shall be expended for the food and environmental quality laboratory.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** Sections 1 through 8 of this act shall constitute a new chapter in Title 15 RCW.